



DIVISIONS
ENERGY
GAS AND OIL
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
MINED LAND RECLAMATION
MINERAL MINING
MINES
ADMINISTRATION

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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DMME Seeks Assistance from Community to Help Identify and Locate Old, Abandoned Gas and Oil Wells

- Information will be used to plug and reclaim orphaned wells -

Lebanon, VA – Citizens of Southwest Virginia may have information that could help the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) locate, plug and clean up old, abandoned gas and oil wells. The agency is asking that residents of the coalfield counties who know of such abandoned wells notify its Division of Gas and Oil (DGO) so location information can be added to its database.

“While we have some data on wells predating 1950, we believe local residents may have valuable information about the specific locations of early gas or oil wells that were abandoned before being properly plugged,” said DGO director, David Asbury. “These old wells can be a potential source of danger to the public and the environment and need to be targeted for plugging and reclamation.”

The Virginia Gas and Oil Act established an Orphaned Well Fund administered by DMME. Well operators pay a \$50 surcharge per permit into the Fund which is used to reclaim orphan gas and oil well sites. Orphaned wells which pose an imminent danger to public safety are given the highest priority.

During the early and mid-1900’s a number of exploratory wells may have been drilled in Southwest Virginia on private property. There may be limited or no public records available on these drilling activities.

The DMME’s Division of Gas and Oil is working to expand its database of information on old, abandoned gas and oil wells and welcomes any public input on the location of previously unidentified, abandoned well sites. Anyone having specific information is encouraged to contact Jerry Hagy, Orphan Well Project coordinator, at the DGO office in Lebanon, VA, at (276) 415-9700, or via e-mail at DgoInfo@dmme.virginia.gov.

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